

LAST PUBLIC ADDRESS

DRAWER 6

ADDRESSES 1864-1865

71 2009.085 04790



Late Addresses of Abraham Lincoln, 1861-1865

Last Public Address
April 11, 1865

Excerpts from newspapers and other sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

April 10, 1865

ENING TRANSCRIPT, TUE

REJOICINGS IN WASHINGTON.

SPEECH BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

Washington, 10th. The intelligence of Lee's surrender was last night known to only a few persons, but this morning the scenes of joyous excitement, such as prevailed here last Monday, were everywhere renewed. The clerks of the Treasury Department, in procession, went to the President's house, in front of which they sang the Star Spangled Banner and Old Hundred, and then passed to the War Department, shouting "Rally round the Flag, Boys," &c. The Secretary of the War Department having been called for, after repeated and urgent demands, appeared before the crowd. He was received with cheering, but asked to be excused, on account of his health, from making any remarks.

The workmen of the navy yard, some 1500 or 3000 in number, formed a procession headed by a band and marched up to the city, firing repeatedly a howitzer and huzzahing. The line was increased by persons falling in on the way. Their design was to congratulate the President, who last night returned from Richmond. Thousands assembled in front of the Executive Mansion. Bands played and many in the crowd sang in unison with the music. Cannon were fired and repeated calls were made for the President. When he appeared at a window he was greeted with huzzas, clapping of hands and waving of hats. He said:

"I am very greatly rejoiced that an occasion has occurred so pleasurable that the people can't restrain themselves. [Cheers.] I suppose arrangements are being made for some sort of formal demonstration, perhaps this evening or tomorrow night. [Voices—'We can't wait.'] If there should be such a demonstration, I, of course, will have to respond to it, [a voice—'Bully for you'] and I will have nothing to say if you dribble it out of me. [Laughter, and cries of 'We want to hear you now.'] I see you have a band. [Voices—'We have three of them.'] I propose now closing up by requesting you to play a certain piece of music or a tune. I thought 'Dixie' one of the best tunes I ever heard." [Laughter.]

The band began to play "Dixie" but soon ceased, as the President had not concluded his remarks. He continued:

"I had heard that our adversaries over the way attempted to appropriate it. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it. [Cheers and laughter.] I presented the question to the Attorney-General, and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize. [Laughter and cheers.] I ask the band to give us a good tune upon it."

The band accordingly played "Dixie" with extraordinary vigor, when three cheers and a tiger were given, followed by the tune of "Yankee Doodle."

The President then proposed three rousing cheers for Gen. Grant and all under his command, and next three cheers for the navy and all its forces. They were most enthusiastically given.

The President retired amid huzzas, to the tune of "Hail Columbia" and the firing of cannon. The crowd then proceeded to the War Department, and various tunes were played. The Secretary was repeatedly called for, but did not appear. The immense concourse of people then separated.

The steam fire-engines were out decorated with flags and screaming their joy along Pennsylvania avenue. There was a salute of 500 guns at daylight, ringing of bells and firing from all the fortifications.

Among those who delivered speeches today, was Gen. Butler. His remarks were principally directed to the subject of the future disposition by the government of the participants in the rebellion. He recommended that all the leaders should be disfranchised and disqualified for holding any office under the government, but that the masses, including the negroes, should have the rights of citizenship.

Several hundred persons gathered before the Executive mansion this afternoon, at 5½ o'clock. Frequent calls were made for the President, who appeared merely to say that if the company had assembled by appointment some mistake had crept into their understandings. He had appeared before a larger audience than this once today, and he would repeat what he said, namely, that he supposed, owing to the great and good news, there would be some demonstration, and he would prefer tomorrow evening, when he should be quite willing, and he hoped ready to say something. He desired to be particular, because everything he said got into print. [Laughter.]

Occupying the position he did, a mistake would produce harm, and therefore he wanted to be careful and not make a mistake. [A voice—"You have not made any yet."] The President was greeted with cheers, and after bidding the crowd good night, retired.

A SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT.—President LINCOLN was serenaded by an immense crowd at Washington last night, and made a facetious little speech in response, which was unresolvable as the riddle of Sphinx, so carefully did he abstain from the expression of any opinion upon which a prognosis of his future action as Chief Magistrate could be based. He announced that there would be a more formal demonstration this evening, when he would take occasion to state his views.

The Argus is afraid Mr. LINCOLN cannot be an honest man because some one says he is worth twenty five millions of dollars! The public will very soon be afraid that the Argus is demented if it continues to give credence to such ridiculous nonsense.

Albany Evening Journal
April 11, 1865

Address by President Lincoln.

The Executive departments, including the President's house, were again illuminated to-night, and adorned with transparencies and national flags; and also many places of business and private residences. Bonfires blazed in various parts of the city and rockets were fired. Thousands of persons, of both sexes, repaired to the Executive mansion, and, after several airs had been played by the band, the President, in response to the unanimous call, appeared at an upper window. The cheering with which he was greeted having ceased, he spoke as follows:

We meet this evening not in sorrow but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace whose joyous expression cannot be restrained.

In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten.

A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared and will be duly promulgated.

Nor must those whose harder part gives us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked, and their honors must not be parcelled out with others. I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you, but no part of the honor or plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skilful officers and brave men, all belongs. The gallant navy stood ready and was in reach to take an active part. By these recent successes, the re-inauguration of the national authority, and the question of reconstruction, which has had a large share of thought from the first, is pressed much more closely upon our attention.

It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike the case of a war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with. No one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mould from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ amongst ourselves as to the mode, manner and measure of reconstruction.

As a general rule I abstain from reading the reports of attacks upon myself, wishing not to be provoked by that to which I cannot properly offer an answer. In spite of this precaution, however, it comes to my knowledge that I am much centred from some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new State government of Louisiana. In this I have done just so much and no more than the public knows.

In the annual message of December, 1863, and the accompanying proclamation, I presented a plan of reconstruction, (as the phrase goes) which I promised, if adopted by any State, should be acceptable to and sustained by the executive government of the nation.

I distinctly stated that this was not the only plan which might possibly be acceptable, and I also distinctly protested that the Executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress from such States. This plan was in advance submitted to the then Cabinet, and was distinctly approved by every member of it. One of them suggested that I should then and in that connection apply the Emancipation Proclamation to the heretofore excepted ports of Virginia and Louisiana; that I should drop the suggestion about apprenticeship for freed people, and that I should omit the protest against my own power in regard to the admission of members of Congress; but even he approved every part and parcel of the plan which has since been employed or touched by the action of Louisiana.

The new constitution of Louisiana, declaring emancipation for the whole State, particularly applies the proclamation to the part previously excepted. It does not adopt apprenticeship for freed people, and it is silent as it could not well be otherwise, about the admission of members to Congress; so that as it applies to Louisiana, every member of the Cabinet fully approved the plan. The message went to Congress, and I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any professed emancipationist came to my knowledge until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it.

From about July, 1862, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested in seeking a reconstruction of State government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned, reached New Orleans, and General Banks wrote me that he was confident the people, with his military co-operation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan, I wrote him and some of them to try it. We tried it, and the result is known.

Such only has been my agency in getting up the Louisiana government. As to sustaining it, my promise is out as before stated, but as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public

interest. But I have not yet been so convinced. I have been shown a letter on this subject, supposed to be an able one, in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixed on the question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would, perhaps, add astonishment to his regret were he to learn that since I have found professed Union men endeavoring to make that a question. I have purposely forbore any public expression upon it, as it appears to me that question has not been nor yet is a practically material one, and that any discussion of it while it thus remains practically immaterial could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing those who are our friends as yet. Whatever it may become hereafter, that question is bad as the basis of a controversy and good for nothing at all—a merely pernicious abstraction.

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States, is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restore the proper practical relations between these States and the Union, and each forever innocently indulge his own opinion whether, in doing the act, he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it.

The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be inconsiderable to all if it contained 50,000 or 30,000, even 20,000 instead of only about 12,000 as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored men. I would myself prefer that it were conferred upon the very intelligent and on those who serve our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government as it stands is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be easier to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and discard it? Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? Some 12,000 voters in the heretofore slave State of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State; held elections, organized a State government, adopted a free State constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the Legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man.

Their Legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These 12,000 persons are thus fully committed to the Union and to perpetual freedom in the State, committed to the very things and nearly all the things the nation wants, and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal. Now if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them.

We, in fact, say to the white men, "you are worthless or worse;" we will neither help you nor be helped by you. To the blacks we say, "this cup of liberty which these your old masters hold to your lips, we will dash from you and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined when, where and now. If this course, by discouraging and paralyzing both white and black, has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper practical relations with the Union, I have so far been unable to perceive it. If, on the contrary, we recognize and sustain the new government of Louisiana the converse of all this is made true.

We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of the 12,000 to adhere to their work and argue for it, and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feed it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success. The colored man, too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance and energy and daring to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps towards it than by running backward over them. Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only, to what it should be, as the egg is to the fowl; we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it. (Laughter.)

Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject our vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition, it has been argued that no more than three-fourths of these States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this, further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned, while a ratification by three-fourths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable.

I repeat the question, can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? What has been said of Louisi-

ana will apply severally to other States, and yet so great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State, and withal so few and unprecedented is the whole case, that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed.

As to details and collaterals, such an exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the south. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied, what action will be proper.

The President, during the delivery of the above speech, was frequently interrupted by applause, and also on its conclusion. The band struck up a patriotic air, when he bowed and retired from the window. There were repeated calls for Senator Sumner, but that gentleman was not present to respond.

Senator Harlan, of Iowa, was then called for, and at the conclusion of the applause with which his appearance was greeted, he directed attention to two principles settled or to be settled by the closing contest.

First. The American people had decided that the majority of the voters of the public should control its destinies, and the insipid processes of the making of its laws.

Second. That no part of the republic should ever be permitted by force to divide the whole of it.

The punishment of the traitors lay in the hands of Congress, and the Constitution pointed out clearly what constituted treason. Those who hatched the treason should suffer the penalty, and under Congress he was willing to trust the future in the hands of the citizens elected a second time to see the laws faithfully executed.

Senator Harlan's remarks were applauded, and the assemblage dispersed after vociferous huzzas and the performance by the band.

A larger and more enthusiastic meeting has seldom if ever before been held in front of the executive mansion.

April 11, 1865

EVENING TRANSCRIPT.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, APRIL 12, 1865.

TOMORROW being the annual Fast Day in this Commonwealth, no paper will be issued from the office of the Transcript.

PRESIDENT LINCOLN'S SPEECH, in Washington last evening, defining his views on "reconstruction" will excite varied comments throughout the country. The President admits the differences of opinion which exist with regard to the most feasible methods of reconstructing the State governments of the South: but, while doing this, he clearly shows that his desire is to avoid all merely abstract questions, and lay hold of the earliest practicable opportunity of bringing the revolted sections again under the sway of the General Government. He remarks, at length, upon the circumstances connected with the adoption of the Free Constitution of Louisiana, and explains its provisions. What he says in regard to Louisiana will measurably apply to the other States that have held conventions and adopted free constitutions. The great end, states the President, is to bring them into "their proper practical relations with the Union." How admirably this phrase disposes of the necessity for heated debate about the technical question whether, in settling the terms of reconstruction, secession is to be considered as legally accomplished or not?

The President's point that the admission of Louisiana will materially assist in so adopting the anti-slavery amendment, that not even a reasonable quibble can be hereafter raised as to its binding force, will have great weight with the country. The ratification, by the requisite three-fourths of the States will, no doubt, be secured. There are indications that Kentucky will soon reverse its vote against the measure.



LAST PUBLIC SPEECH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Speech Delivered by Lincoln on April 11, 1865, Three Days Before His Assassination
in Which He Appeals to the American People to Join Hands in Peace and Build a Re-
United Nation to Stand Forever as a Beacon of Liberty to the People of the Earth



E meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained.

In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked. Their honors must not be parceled out with others. I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor for plan or execution is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all belongs. The gallant navy stood ready, but was not in reach to take active part.

By these recent successes, the reinauguration of the national authority—reconstruction—which has had a large share of thought from the first is pressed much more closely upon our attention. It is fraught with great difficulty. Unlike a case of war between independent nations, there is no authorized organ for us to treat with—no one man has authority to give up the rebellion for any other man. We simply must begin with and mold from disorganized and discordant elements. Nor is it a small additional embarrassment that we, the loyal people, differ among ourselves as to the mode, manner, and measure of reconstruction. As a general rule, I abstain from reading the reports of attacks upon myself, wishing not to be provoked by that to which I cannot properly offer an answer. In spite of this precaution, however, it comes to my knowledge that I am much censured for some supposed agency in setting up and seeking to sustain the new State government of Louisiana.

In this I have done just so much and no more than the public knows. In the annual message of December, 1863, and in the accompanying proclamation, I presented a plan of reconstruction, as the phrase goes, which I promised, if adopted by any State, should be acceptable to and sustained by the executive government of the nation. I distinctly stated that this was not the only plan which might possibly be acceptable, and I also distinctly protested that the executive claimed no right to say when or whether members should be admitted to seats in Congress from such States. This plan was in advance submitted to the then Cabinet, and distinctly approved by every member of it. One of them suggested that I should then and in that connection apply the Emancipation Proclamation to the theretofore excepted parts of Virginia and Louisiana; that I should drop the suggestion about apprenticeship for freed people, and that I should omit the protest against my own power in regard to the admission of members to Congress. But even he approved every part and parcel of the plan which has since been employed or touched by the action of Louisiana.

The new constitution of Louisiana, declaring emancipation for the whole State, practically applies the proclamation to the part previously excepted. It does not adopt apprenticeship for freed people, and it is silent, as it could

We Must Mold from the Discordant Elements of Society

not well be otherwise, about the admission of members to Congress. So that, as it applies to Louisiana, every member of the Cabinet fully approved the plan. The message went to Congress, and I received many commendations of the plan, written and verbal, and not a single objection to it from any professed emancipationist came to my knowledge until after the news reached Washington that the people of Louisiana had begun to move in accordance with it. From about July, 1862, I had corresponded with different persons supposed to be interested in seeking a reconstruction of a State government for Louisiana. When the message of 1863, with the plan before mentioned, reached New Orleans, General Banks wrote me that he was confident that the people, with his military co-operation, would reconstruct substantially on that plan. I wrote to him and some of them to try it. They tried it, and the result is known. Such has been my only agency in getting up the Louisiana government.

As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated. But as bad promises are better broken than kept, I shall treat this as a bad promise, and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest; but I have not yet been so convinced. I have been shown a letter on this subject, supposed to be an able one, in which the writer expresses regret that my mind has not seemed to be definitely fixed on the question whether the seceded States, so called, are in the Union or out of it. It would perhaps add astonishment to his regret were he to learn that since I have found professed Union men endeavoring to make that question, I have purposely forborne any public expression upon it. As appears to me, that question has not been, nor yet is, a practically material one, and that any discussion of it, while it thus remains practically immaterial, could have no effect other than the mischievous one of dividing our friends. As yet, whatever it may hereafter become, that question is bad as the basis of a controversy and good for nothing at all—a merely pernicious abstraction.

We all agree that the seceded States, so called, are out of their proper, practical relation with the Union, and that the sole object of the government, civil and military, in regard to those States, is to again get them into that proper practical relation. I believe that it is not only possible, but in fact easier, to do this without deciding or even considering whether these States have ever been out of the Union, than with it. Finding themselves safely at home, it would be utterly immaterial whether they had ever been abroad. Let us all join in doing the acts necessary to restoring the proper practical relations between these States and the Union, and each forever after innocently indulge his own opinion whether in doing the acts he brought the States from without into the Union, or only gave them proper assistance, they never having been out of it. The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, would be more satisfactory to all if it contained 50,000 or 30,000, or even 20,000, instead of only about 12,000, as it does. It is also unsatisfactory to some that the elective franchise is not given to the colored man. I would myself prefer that it were now conferred on the very intelligent, and on those who serve our cause as soldiers.

Still, the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is desirable. The question is, will it be wiser to take it as it is and help to improve it, or to reject and disperse it? Can Louisiana be brought

If We Reject and Scorn We Do Our Utmost to Disorganize

into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? Some twelve thousand voters in the heretofore slave State of Louisiana have sworn allegiance to the Union, assumed to be the rightful political power of the State, held elections, organized a State government, adopted a free-State constitution, giving the benefit of public schools equally to black and white, and empowering the legislature to confer the elective franchise upon the colored man. Their legislature has already voted to ratify the constitutional amendment recently passed by Congress, abolishing slavery throughout the nation. These 12,000 persons are thus fully committed to the Union and to perpetual freedom in the State—committed to the very things, and nearly all the things, the nation wants—and they ask the nation's recognition and its assistance to make good their committal.

Now, if we reject and spurn them, we do our utmost to disorganize and disperse them. We, in effect, say to the white man: You are worthless or worse; we will neither help you, nor be helped by you. To the blacks we say: This cup of liberty which these, your old masters, hold to your lips we will dash from you, and leave you to the chances of gathering the spilled and scattered contents in some vague and undefined when, where, and how. If this course, discouraging and paralyzing both white and black, has any tendency to bring Louisiana into proper practical relations with the Union, I have so far been unable to perceive it. If, on the contrary, we recognize and sustain the new government of Louisiana, the converse of all this is made true. We encourage the hearts and nerve the arms of the 12,000 to adhere to their work, and argue for it, and proselyte for it, and fight for it, and feed it, and grow it, and ripen it to a complete success. The colored man, too, in seeing all united for him, is inspired with vigilance, and energy, and daring, to the same end. Grant that he desires the elective franchise, will he not attain it sooner by saving the already advanced steps toward it than by running backward over them? Concede that the new government of Louisiana is only what it should be, as the egg is to the fowl, we shall sooner have the fowl by hatching the egg than by smashing it.

Again, if we reject Louisiana, we also reject one vote in favor of the proposed amendment to the national Constitution. To meet this proposition, it has been argued that no more than three-fourths of those States which have not attempted secession are necessary to validly ratify the amendment. I do not commit myself against this further than to say that such a ratification would be questionable, and sure to be persistently questioned, while a ratification by three-fourths of all the States would be unquestioned and unquestionable. I repeat the question: Can Louisiana be brought into proper practical relation with the Union sooner by sustaining or by discarding her new State government? What has been said of Louisiana will apply generally to other States. And yet so great peculiarities pertain to each State, and such important and sudden changes occur in the same State, and withal so new and unprecedented is the whole case that no exclusive and inflexible plan can safely be prescribed as to details and collaterals. Such an exclusive and inflexible plan would surely become a new entanglement. Important principles may and must be inflexible. In the present situation, as the phrase goes, it may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper.

Wisdom and Philosophy of Abraham Lincoln

"I desire to see the time when education, by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise, and integrity, shall become much more general than at present, and should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate the happy period."

"And when the victory shall be complete,—when there shall be neither a slave nor a drunkard on earth,—how proud the title of that land, which may truly claim to be the birthplace and the cradle of both those resolutions that shall have ended in that victory! How nobly distinguished that people, who shall have planted, and nurtured to maturity, both the political and moral freedom of their species!"

"Capital has its rights, which are as worthy of protection as any rights, nor is it denied that there is, and probably always will be, a relation between labor and capital, producing mutual benefits . . . No men living are more worthy to be trusted than those who toil up from poverty—none less inclined to take or touch aught which they have not honestly earned."

"In regard to the Great Book, I have only to say that it is the best gift which God has given man. All the good from the Saviour of the world is communicated to us through this Book. But for this Book we could not know right from wrong. All those things to man are contained in it."

"Give the Boys a chance." "We cannot escape history." "I can bear censure, but not insult!" "Don't swap horses in crossing a stream." "Let us have faith that right makes might." "Public opinion in this country is everything." "I know I am right because I know Liberty is right." "Is a man to blame for having a pair of cowardly legs?"

"That some are rich shows that others may become rich."

"Come what will, I will keep my faith with friend and foe."

"Faith in God is indispensable to successful statesmanship."

"There is no grievance that is a fit object of redress by mob law."

"My boy, never *try* to be President! If you do, you never *will* be."

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present."

"The Lord must love the common people—that's why he made so many of them."

"Keep that (temperance) pledge and it will be the best act of your life."

"No man is good enough to govern another man without that other man's consent."

"Familiarize yourself with the chains of bondage and you prepare your own limbs to wear them."

"A man has no time to spend in quarrels. If any man ceases to attack me I never remember the past against him."

"The importance for man and beast of the prescribed weekly rest, the sacred rights of Christian soldiers and sailors, a becoming deference to the best sentiments of a Christian people, and a due regard for the divine will, demand that Sunday labor be reduced to the measure of strict necessity."

Abraham Lincoln's Last Speech.

On the occasion when Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, made his last speech to the people—April 11th, 1865, there was a vast crowd outside the White House at Washington. The president spoke from one of the windows; and the scene is described by Mr. Francis F. Browne in his "Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln":

"As Lincoln spoke the multitude was as silent as if the courtyard had been deserted. Then, as his speech was written on loose sheets and the candles were placed too low, he took a light in his hand and went on reading. But he found difficulty in handling the manuscript and holding the candlestick, so a friend who stood behind the drapery of the window reached out and took the candle and held it until the end of the speech, and the President let the loose pages fall on the floor one by one as fast as he was through with them.

"Presently Tad Lincoln, having refreshed himself at the dinner table, came in search of amusement and began to occupy himself by chasing the leaves about the floor as they fluttered from the speaker's hand. Growing impatient at his father's delay in dropping another page, Tad whispered, 'Come, give me another.'

"The President made a queer motion with his foot towards the boy, but otherwise showed no sign that he had heard. Without was a vast sea of upturned faces, each eye fixed on the President. Round the tall white pillars of the portico flowed an undulating surface of human beings stirred by emotion and lighted by the fantastic colors of fireworks. At the window, his face irradiated with patriotic joy, was the beloved Lincoln, reading the speech that was to be his last to the people. Behind him the boy of the White House crept back and forth on his hands and knees, gathering up his father's carefully-written pages and occasionally lifting up his eager face, waiting for more. When I recall that night I wonder how much of a father's love and thought of his boy might have mingled in Lincoln's last speech to the eager multitude."

1817

A BAD PROMISE OR LINCOLN'S LAST WORDS IN PUBLIC.

Editor National Tribune: Will you kindly tell me where I can find President Lincoln's speech in which he made use of the statement that "A bad promise is better broken than kept?"—O. L. S., Scranton, Pa.

The evacuation of Petersburg took place April 2, 1865; Richmond, April 3, 1865. Gen. Lee's Army surrendered April 9. These events made glad hearts, giving hope of speedy peace. The White House Executive Departments, many business houses and private residences in Washington were illuminated.

Thousands of both sexes marched to the Executive Mansion singing, with band playing familiar tunes.

President Lincoln, in response to the numerous calls appeared at an upper window and spoke to those assembled.

In his speech he referred to the surrender and the gladness of heart felt by the nation over the good news. He referred to the Thanksgiving Day, which has been proclaimed. The President's speech soon drifted to a situation that existed in the State of Louisiana which was giving him considerable trouble. Early in 1864, Louisiana formed a Union Government and chose a Legislature and elected Members of Congress, but the House of Representatives refused to admit the members elected.

In connection with this, Mr. Lincoln had made certain promises, which under the change of conditions proved unpopular with the public press and officials, and the President was smarting under the criticism.

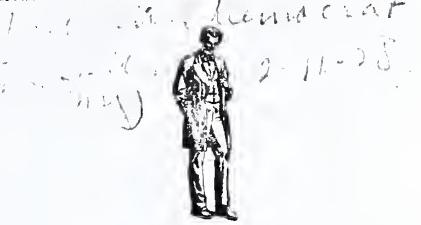
2.9.1882

In the outlook for change of conditions, the President thought he would be justified in not fulfilling his promise. In this connection he said, "As to sustaining it, my promise is out, as before stated—but as bad promises are better broken than kept—I shall treat this as a bad promise and break it whenever I shall be convinced that keeping it is adverse to the public interest, but I have not yet been so convinced."

The President's speech closed with the following statement: "It may be my duty to make some new announcement to the people of the South. I am considering, and shall not fail to act when satisfied that action will be proper."

This speech was made on April 11, 1865, and was President Lincoln's last words in public. It will be remembered that the assassination took place in Ford's Theater at 9:30 p. m., April 14, and that the President died at 7:22 the following morning.

A copy of the speech can be found in the "War for the Union," by E. A. Duyckinck, and the "Great Epochs in American History," by F. W. Hasley, Vol. 9.



Lincoln's Last Public Address—

"We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. Nor must those whose harder part give us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked; their honors must not be parceled out with others.

"I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting the good news to you; but no part of the honor, for plan or execution, is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all belongs."

(Remarks on April 11, 1865, to a gathering at the White House on the fall of Richmond.)

INCIDENTS OF LINCOLN'S

LAST SPEECH

Edward, the conservative but dignified butler of the White House, was seen struggling with Tad and trying to drag him back from the window from which was waving a Confederate flag captured in some fight and given to the boy. Edward conquered and Tad, rushing to find his father, met him coming forward to make, as it proved, his last speech.

The speech began with these words, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart." Having his speech written in loose leaves, and being compelled to hold a candle in the other hand, he would let the loose leaves drop to the floor one by one. Tad picked them up as they fell, and impatiently called for more as they fell from his father's hand.

— 1952



golden glow ▲

Early 17th-century Japanese screens rarely are found outside Japan, but thanks to a fund from anonymous donors, the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, has acquired a pair from the Hasegawa School. (Comparable examples can range from \$250,000 to \$500,000.) The screens depict wisteria growing over fences—a brushwood fence on the right and a green bamboo fence on the left. According to Andrew Marke, the museum's curator of Japanese art, that period saw considerable construction of castles and palatial residences, which led to a demand for decorative elements.

"These screens are quite unusual and serve more than creating smaller areas within a larger space," he says. Used in dark rooms lit only by candles, the screens' painted areas tend to recede while the gilded portions seem to glow. "The result,"

Marke notes, "is increased reflective light." —D.G.

louvre oeuvre ▼

Edgard Degas created several renderings of his friend Mary Cassatt leaning on an umbrella at the Louvre Museum, but this masterful pastel is considered the most ambitious. Created around 1879 at the height of what is considered Degas' best period, "Au Musée du Louvre" is a double portrait of Cassatt in the museum galleries, seen from behind as she is observed by a woman (believed to be her sister, Lydia), who is looking up from a museum guidebook. "It is an intimate

portrait of both life and art," says Andrew Strauss, senior specialist in Impressionist and Modern paintings at Sotheby's New York. The work, which

was consigned by Argentine collector Amalia Lacroze de Fortebat, has been widely published. It first came on the market in the sale of Degas' estate in 1918 and was last at auction at Sotheby's New York's sale of the Erna Wolf Dreyfus and Julius Wolf collection in May 1984, when it brought \$2.8 million. Last May it was sold at Sotheby's New York for \$16.5 million, the second-highest-priced Degas painting ever sold at auction. —A.P.

lincoln memorial ▲

The last complete speech by Abraham Lincoln still in private hands was sold at Christie's New York in March for a record-breaking \$3.1 million, nearly doubling the previous auction record for an American historical document. Lincoln delivered the 12-page handwritten speech, formerly in the collection of Malcolm Forbes, from a window in the White House on April 11, 1865, the day after Robert E. Lee had surrendered and three days before his assassination. In



themselves, safety at home, it would be fitting to ask whether they have ever been allowed to do or all you're doing the acts necessary to restore the proper practical relations between this state, over the Union, are such forms after, moments, indulge him, our opinion is that this in doing the acts, he brought the state, from military, into the Union, or only, gave them proper importance, being indemnified?

The amount of constituency, so to speak, on which the new Louisiana government rests, will be more satisfactory to all of its constituents, than, or even better than, any number of any about twelve thousand, as it was. It is also unsatisfactory to give that the election franchise is not given to the colored men. I would say, if possible, that it was now more conforming to the very intelligence, now on these subjects, our cause as soldiers. Still the question is not whether the Louisiana government, as it stands, is quite all that is demanded. The

his address, which began, "We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart," Lincoln called for mild, humane proposals for the reconstruction of the South and for voting rights for African-Americans.

"They were the actual sheets that Lincoln had read from the White House," says Chris Coover, senior specialist in Christie's books and manuscripts department, "and the speech was especially poignant coming just a few days before his death."

—D.G.

eyeing the campus ▶

With its venerable ivy-covered brick buildings, Berkshire Mountains' backdrop and rolling green lawns, the Williams College campus in Williamstown, Massachusetts, resembles a movie set (in fact, it has served as the setting for films, including "A Change of Seasons," which was filmed there in 1980 and stars Shirley MacLaine, Bo Derek and Anthony Hopkins, and the

Lincoln's Last Speech.

As additional dispatches were received from the union army in the spring of 1865, the joyful excitement in Washington increased. Tuesday evening, April 11, the president's mansion, the executive departments and many of the business places and private residences were illuminated, bonfires were kindled and fireworks were set off in celebration of the great event. Mr. Francis F. Browne, in his *Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln*, tells the story of that evening. A vast mass of citizens crowded about the white house, and Lincoln appeared at the east window and made his last speech to the people. It was rather long, and he had written it out on separate sheets for the occasion.

"We meet this evening, not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart," began the president. "No part of the honor or praise is mine. To Gen. Grant, his skillful officers and brave men, all belongs."

Mr. Brooks, who was in the white house during the delivery of this address, gives the following glimpses behind the scenes: "As Lincoln spoke, the multitude was as silent as if the courtyard had been deserted. Then, as his speech was written on loose sheets and the candles were placed too low, he took a light in his hand and went on reading. But he found difficulty in handling the manuscript and holding the candlestick; so a friend who stood behind the drapery of the window reached out and took the candle and held it until the end of the speech, and the president let the loose pages fall on the floor, one by one, as fast as he was through with them.

"Presently Tad Lincoln, having refreshed himself at the dinner table, came back in search of amusement and began to occupy himself by chasing the leaves about the floor as they fluttered from the speaker's hand. Growing impatient at his father's delay in dropping another page, Tad whispered, 'Come, give me another!'

The president made a queer motion with his foot toward the boy, but otherwise showed no sign that he had heard. Without was a vast sea of upturned faces, each eye fixed on the president. Round the tall, white pillars of the portico flowed an undulating surface of human beings stirred by emotion and lighted by the fantastic colors of fire works. At the window, his face irradiated with patriotic joy, was the beloved Lincoln, reading the speech that was to be his last to the people. Behind him the boy of the white house crept back and forth on his hands and knees, gathering up his father's carefully written pages and occasionally lifting up his eager face, waiting for more. When I recall that night, I wonder how much of a father's love and thought of his boy might have been mingled in Lincoln's last speech to the eager multitude."



